
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

As the population grows, so does the demand for public services and the facilities where they are provided. In planning for public facilities, it is important to consider not just the size of the County's future population but also its age and geographic distribution. Seniors and school-age children, for example, have very different service and facility needs. Moreover, the uneven geographic distribution of population growth is expected to continue. This increasing concentration of people in the lower County must also be taken into consideration in facility planning, since facilities should be convenient to the citizens who use them. Public facilities planning is especially challenging in York County because of its geography: York is a linear county, with the upper County separated from the lower County by a vast expanse of Federally-owned land. Consequently, without a central location that is readily convenient to a majority of County residents, it is sometimes necessary to have separate facilities for upper and lower County residents in order to meet the citizens' demands for conveniently located facilities.

Since many of the County's public facility needs are shared by neighboring jurisdictions, regionalism is often the most efficient way to meet these needs. Because it adjoins all other localities on the Peninsula, York County is uniquely suited to engage in a variety of regional efforts that allow communities to recognize facility *service area* boundaries, which are often more realistic than jurisdictional boundaries in providing community facilities. Regionalism often increases efficiency not only because it prevents needless duplication of effort but also because economies of scale can be realized.

Many changes have been made to community facilities in the County since 1991 to address some of the needs and issues identified in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan and some new problems that arose after its adoption. The County's severe jail overcrowding problem has been eliminated with the construction of the Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail. Likewise, construction of the new courthouse has eliminated the court overcrowding problem and dramatically improved the security and efficiency of court operations. The new courthouse also has helped to alleviate the overcrowding of County offices, as has the construction of the County Operations Center on Goodwin Neck Road. In addition, through the acquisition of 12 acres on Route 134, the County has taken the first steps toward eliminating the deficiency in library space documented in the 1991 plan.

School overcrowding, which emerged as a problem in the fall of 1992 with both the unexpected influx of a thousand new students and the School Board's redefinition and recalculation of school capacity, has been addressed with the construction of Grafton High/Middle School, additions to Coventry, Grafton-Bethel, and Magruder elementary schools, and reconstruction of Tabb High School.

Another problem involving community facilities that arose after the adoption of the 1991 plan was the advent of new state and federal landfill regulations that made continued operation of the County's landfill prohibitively expensive. The Board of Supervisors subsequently elected to close the landfill, which then became the site for a solid waste transfer station and a regional facility for composting yard debris. Related to this decision was the initiation of curbside trash and recyclable collection, which was one of the recommendations of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan.

Because "Community Facilities" is such a wide-ranging topic, this element of the Comprehensive Plan is divided into five sub-elements: Detention and Law Enforcement, Fire and Rescue, Government Offices, Libraries, and Schools. Each sub-element contains a summary description of existing conditions and a discussion of citizen input and planning policies for that particular topic. Following these sections is a summary of major changes in community facilities that have occurred since the adoption of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, followed by an *overall* discussion of citizen input and planning policies related to community facilities in general. Like the other elements, this element concludes with a section detailing the Vision, Goals, and Strategies for community facilities.

DETENTION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The York County Sheriff is the County's chief law enforcement officer, serves as court bailiff for York County and Poquoson, and, until recently, oversaw the York County Jail, which was demolished in 1998. York County's prisoners are now housed in the Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail with prisoners from James City County, Williamsburg, and Poquoson. A regional juvenile detention center also has been constructed on the Peninsula Regional Jail site.

The new regional jail has eliminated the jail overcrowding problem but does nothing to *prevent* crime from occurring or to make people feel more safe. As illustrated in **Figure 5**, York County's crime rate, which is one of the lowest on the Peninsula, has fluctuated over the years, generally declining from 1992 to 1996. Nevertheless, in a fast-growing locality, a crime rate that is stable or even declining slightly means that the *number* of crimes is increasing.

Detention and law enforcement in the County have undergone several changes since 1991, the most obvious of which is the closing of the York County Jail in Yorktown and the construction of the Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail on Merrimac Trail (Route 143) in James City County. This jail is built to house up to 288 prisoners and is designed to accommodate future expansion should the need arise.

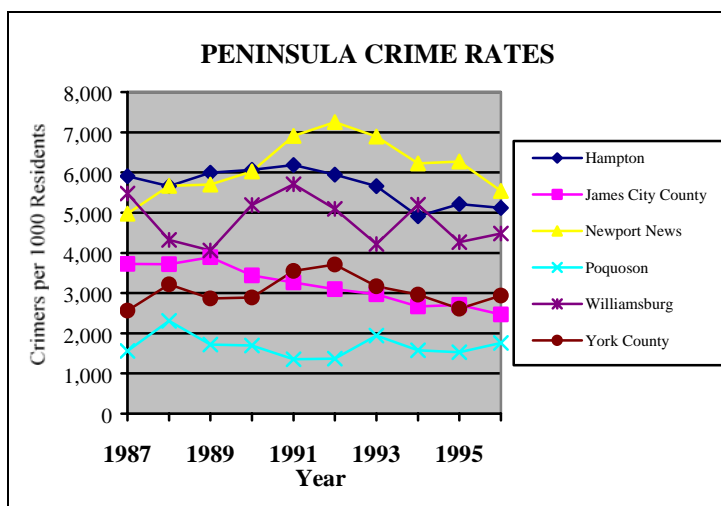


Figure 5

The other significant change is the construction of the Merrimac Center, which is a regional juvenile detention center located next to the Regional Jail on Merrimac Trail in James City County. This 48-bed center, which opened in December 1997, is owned and operated by a regional Juvenile Detention Commission made up of nineteen member localities, including York County. It is a self-contained facility with 24-hour per day supervision of juvenile offenders under the age of eighteen. The Commonwealth pays a portion of the operating costs and the member localities pay a per diem charge for each juvenile housed.

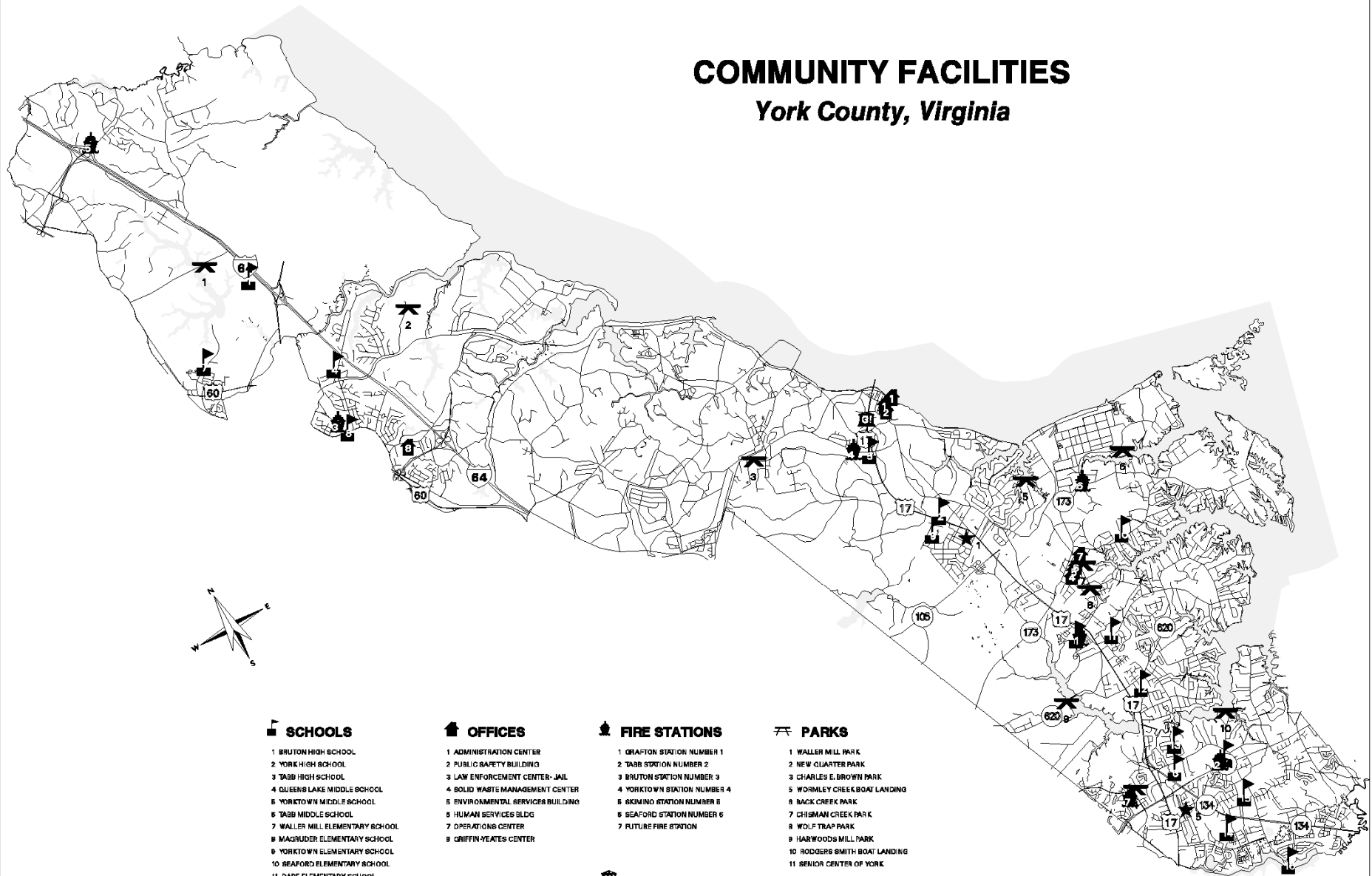
CITIZEN INPUT AND PLANNING POLICIES: DETENTION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Citizen support for satellite sheriff's sub-stations appears to be high relative to other community facilities, ranking third among the eight choices given on the Comprehensive Plan Review Survey. The purpose of sub-stations is for law enforcement to provide an effective deterrent to crime by establishing a presence within our communities. The Sheriff's Office currently provides such a presence through its ongoing patrols throughout the County, but resources and manpower are limited, and it would not be feasible to have a deputy on every street corner. Small sheriff's sub-stations located in different areas of the County are one way to establish a *permanent* presence that might help to prevent crime. Currently, the Sheriff's Office operates out of the York County Finance Building in Yorktown but is to be relocated to the County Operations Center, which is less centrally located, geographically, than Yorktown, but is closer to the center of population. As part of an overall community policing strategy, sub-stations in different areas of the County could help to build strong bonds between law enforcement personnel and the people they are there to protect.

The County's detention needs have been met with the construction of the regional jail and juvenile detention center, both of which can be expanded if the need arises.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

York County, Virginia



SCHOOLS

- 1 BRUTON HIGH SCHOOL
- 2 YORK HIGH SCHOOL
- 3 TABB HIGH SCHOOL
- 4 QUEENS LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL
- 5 YORKTOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL
- 6 TABB MIDDLE SCHOOL
- 7 WALLER MILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 8 MAGRUDER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 9 YORKTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 10 SEAFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 11 DARE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 12 GRAFTON BETHEL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 13 MOUNT VERNON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 14 COVENTRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 15 TABB ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 16 BETHEL MANOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 17 GRAFTON HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL
- 18 FUTURE SCHOOL SITE

OFFICES

- 1 ADMINISTRATION CENTER
- 2 PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
- 3 LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER-JAIL
- 4 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT CENTER
- 5 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES BUILDING
- 6 HUMAN SERVICES BLDG
- 7 OPERATIONS CENTER
- 8 GRIFFIN-YEATES CENTER

LIBRARIES

- 1 YORK COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

FIRE STATIONS

- 1 GRAFTON STATION NUMBER 1
- 2 TABB STATION NUMBER 2
- 3 BRUTON STATION NUMBER 3
- 4 YORKTOWN STATION NUMBER 4
- 5 SKIMINO STATION NUMBER 5
- 6 SEAFORD STATION NUMBER 6
- 7 FUTURE FIRE STATION

COURT BUILDINGS

- 1 CIRCUIT COURT BUILDING
- 2 DISTRICT COURTS BUILDING
- 3 FUTURE COURT BUILDING

PARKS

- 1 WALLER MILL PARK
- 2 NEW QUARTER PARK
- 3 CHARLES E. BROWN PARK
- 5 WORMLEY CREEK BOAT LANDING
- 8 BACK CREEK PARK
- 7 CHISMAN CREEK PARK
- 8 WOLF TRAP PARK
- 9 HARWOODS MILL PARK
- 10 RODGERS SMITH BOAT LANDING
- 11 SENIOR CENTER OF YORK

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FIRE AND RESCUE

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Fire and rescue, including Emergency Medical Services (EMS), is provided by the York County Department of Fire and Life Safety. Fire and rescue field operations are conducted from six fire stations strategically located throughout the County to ensure emergency response to most areas within five minutes or less. A site for a future fire station is located on Kiln Creek Parkway in the Tabb area. The County also maintains mutual aid agreements with surrounding localities and federal facilities that provide for the sharing of resources during emergency incidents.

Fire and rescue personnel are required to respond to many different types of emergencies besides fires and car accidents. To ensure response to the broad range of emergencies that can occur in the County, the Department of Fire and Life Safety has developed contingencies for special incident responses, both locally and regionally. A technical rescue team operates out of the Yorktown Fire Station, which is centrally located for response to both the upper and lower County. This team, which is also part of a larger regional technical rescue team, includes water rescue, rope rescue, and limited confined space, trench, and heavy vehicle rescue. The County also has the capability, though somewhat limited, to respond to certain types of hazardous materials incidents. Fire and rescue personnel are trained to provide defensive tactics should a spill, leak, or fire occur with very limited types of hazardous materials. In addition, because the County is vulnerable to hazards – such as a Surry Nuclear Power Station accident, a hurricane or other natural disaster, or a significant hazardous materials incident – that can affect large, heavily populated areas, the County’s Office of Emergency Management develops and maintains emergency operations plans to deal with such large-scale emergencies.

Training of fire and life safety personnel is critical to the County’s continued readiness for response and service. The Department of Fire and Life Safety coordinates and/or conducts most of the training required for its staff. The department participates on a regional basis for its dispatcher and firefighter recruit training and routinely conducts in-house continuing education and refresher training.

Other than the relocation of office space and the establishment of the Grafton High/Middle School as an emergency shelter, there have been no changes to fire and rescue facilities since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in 1991. Shortly before the plan was adopted, the County completed a dramatic expansion of its fire and rescue capability, doubling from three to six the number of fire stations in the County. There have, however, been programmatic and other changes, some of which could affect facility needs. These include automatic external defibrillation capability placed on fire apparatus; more efficient use of properly designed rescue trucks; use of mechanical CPR devices called thumpers; initiation of the technical rescue team; combined vehicle functions; and participation in the Tidewater Regional Technical Rescue Team.

New programs include the “Heads Up” program, pre-arrival emergency medical instructions, the “Appeals on Wheels” speed awareness radar trailer, the Fall Prevention Program (designed to prevent ground level falls and personal injuries), and various educational programs.

CITIZEN INPUT AND PLANNING POLICIES: FIRE AND RESCUE

Based on the Comprehensive Plan Citizen Input Process, the citizens are satisfied with the quality of fire and rescue service in the County. This is one aspect of the County’s quality of life that generated few if any calls for change or improvement among the citizens. This is not surprising since the County only recently completed a significant upgrade of its emergency response capability, adding three fire stations. The citizens’ satisfaction with the County’s emergency response capability is also a tribute to the high quality of service provided by the Department of Fire and Life Safety.

Continued population growth in York County and the surrounding area will affect the County’s fire and rescue response capability in a variety of ways. As the population continues to grow and as buildings age, the activity level of each fire station will change accordingly and will affect the ability to maintain the desired five-minute maximum response time. Furthermore, more residents will live in potential hurricane impact areas and in proximity to a transportation network that already carries large amounts of hazardous materials. More people also will live within the ten-mile emergency protection zone of the Surry Nuclear

Power Station. An efficient transportation network not only in York County but throughout the region will be critical to the ability of residents to evacuate from Hampton Roads. In addition, emergency sheltering needs will continue to increase in order to adequately accommodate higher population and residents that may have special needs.

The key to acceptable response times is the availability of units within an acceptable distance, as well as an adequate transportation network with limited traffic congestion. Currently, the County has an additional fire station site on Kiln Creek Parkway in Tabb. Other stations may be needed sometime after 2004. However, existing stations may need to be expanded before then. The Yorktown Station, for example, which houses the technical rescue team, may need additional bay/apparatus storage space in the future because of the amount of equipment housed at this facility and the importance of its central location.

Although no new fire stations will be needed in the foreseeable future, the 1991 Comprehensive Plan identified the need for some type of training facility for fire and rescue personnel. In cooperation with state agencies and other localities in Hampton Roads, the County is pursuing expansion of its training resources with such things as dispatcher training props and a fire burn building and training facility. It is desirable that any such facility be located in York County or nearby in order to minimize the impact on emergency services response capability when equipment and personnel are sent for training.

GOVERNMENT OFFICES

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

York County has two major government office complexes – one in Yorktown and one on Goodwin Neck Road – with a total of ten buildings. The Solid Waste Management Building is also located on Goodwin Neck Road, while the Griffin-Yeates Center is located on Government Road in the upper County.

In addition to being one of the County's major governmental centers, Yorktown is home to the County's court system. The circuit court, general district court, and juvenile and domestic relations court for York County and Poquoson operate out of the new York-Poquoson Courthouse in Yorktown, which opened in 1997. This 59,680-square foot courthouse was built to accommodate the rapidly growing caseloads of the courts and to address numerous deficiencies in the former Circuit Courthouse and the former District Court Building that compromised the security, safety, and efficiency of court operations. The new courthouse, which also houses court-related agencies, has been designed to meet the County's court space needs at least through the year 2014. It contains five courtrooms and has room for expansion if necessary.

Significant changes have been made since 1991 to increase the amount of County office and court space, most notable of which are the construction of the County Operations Center in 1992 and the new York-Poquoson Courthouse in 1997. The Operations Center now houses the Departments of Environmental and Development Services and General Services, while the Department of Fire and Life Safety and the Sheriff's Office are scheduled to move into the Human Services Building. In addition, a new 4,200-square foot building has been constructed at the Operations Center to house the Division of Parks and Recreation and the VPI Extension Service. In addition, the former Circuit Courthouse and the former District Courts Building (now known to as the Finance Building) are scheduled for renovation work. Several departments and agencies will be relocated in 1998 and 1999 to make efficient use of the space that has become available since the new York-Poquoson Courthouse was completed. In addition, the Law Enforcement Center (York County Jail) and Law Enforcement Center Annex have been demolished to provide for more open space and parking in historic Yorktown.

CITIZEN INPUT AND PLANNING POLICIES: GOVERNMENT OFFICES

In the Comprehensive Plan Review Citizen Input Process, citizens did not express any interest in adding court or office space. This is not surprising since the courthouse was under construction at the time and since County offices are generally viewed as benefiting County employees more than citizens. Almost two-thirds of the residents want the seat of County government to remain in historic Yorktown, while less than a third, most of whom live in the lower County, favor moving it to the Goodwin Neck Road campus

to be closer to the center of the County's population. On the survey, the citizens generally did not support the idea of establishing satellite County offices offering limited services (such as tax/bill payment, decal sales, car registrations, etc.) in convenient locations.

In a steadily growing community, it is almost inevitable that the size of the government – particularly at the local level, where most government services are directly provided – will grow to meet the needs of its citizens. York County's development from a largely rural county into a suburban one facing correspondingly more complex issues caused the County's workforce to increase between 1980 and 1990 from 7.8 to 10.2 employees per thousand residents. Since 1990, increases in County employment have been much less dramatic: The number of employees rose to 535 in 1995, while the number of employees per thousand residents was basically unchanged at 10.4. Much of this growth is due to an increased commitment to public safety reflected in the opening of three new fire stations and the hiring of additional Sheriff's deputies. In fact, almost half of the new full-time positions created between 1990 and 1995 are in the Department of Fire and Life Safety and the Sheriff's Office.

Prior to the construction of the York-Poquoson Courthouse in 1997, many of the departments and constitutional offices were overcrowded. Space that became vacant in various buildings as a result of the construction of the new courthouse will alleviate most of the overcrowded office conditions for five to ten years and in some cases provide room for modest growth until the year 2015. If the ratio of employees to population were to remain stable in the future as the population grows – or even to decline somewhat as a result of increased efficiency through technological advances – it is projected that the County would need an additional 100 to 150 employees by 2015 in order to continue to provide high-quality service to its citizens. Although some of these employees will be field employees (deputies, laborers, mechanics, etc.) who do not need office space, others will require office space.

Without the acquisition of more land, there is little opportunity to expand office facilities in Yorktown other than the Administration Center, which is not architecturally or aesthetically compatible with historic Yorktown. If the Administration Center were demolished, a new building could be constructed that could address aesthetic issues and, if necessary, provide some additional office space. In contrast to Yorktown, the Operations Center has significant land area (52 acres) to build more office and shop space for County departments and agencies without acquiring more land. Since the results of the Comprehensive Plan Review Survey do not indicate any strong citizen demand for satellite County offices (except for satellite Sheriff's sub-stations), there does not appear to be a need to acquire additional land for County office space.

In addition, new technologies now provide opportunities to reduce the need for office space. Telecommuting, for example, which allows employees to work in their homes, connected to the office by a computer and a modem, has been in use for years in private industry and also in some public agencies that have found it to be far more cost-effective than building, operating, and maintaining office buildings. This concept should become more widespread and efficient in local government when video conferencing becomes more popular and cost-effective. Similarly, the use of CD-ROM and other electronic means of file storage and retrieval can greatly reduce the County's record storage space needs.

As noted earlier, the new courthouse has been designed to meet the County's court space needs at least through the year 2014 and could potentially meet needs well beyond through the use of new technology, extension of court hours, addition of a courtroom on the second floor, or relocation of various court functions to the adjacent Finance Building. The new courthouse has five courtrooms and is large enough to handle a Family Court if one is created.

LIBRARY SERVICE

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

York County operates an 11,900 square foot public library located on Route 17 in Grafton. As a result of population growth, the demand for library services exceeds the capacity of this facility. Consequently, as recommended in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, the County has acquired land on Route 134 in Tabb for a second library, which has recently been completed. Most upper County residents use the Williamsburg-James City County Regional Library System. The Regional Library operates two facilities – one in the

City of Williamsburg and one in upper James City County – which are geographically convenient for upper York County residents. Although not a member of the regional system, York County makes a voluntary annual contribution to help offset user costs.

The Virginia State Library Board (VSLB) has recommended guidelines for the provision of library services. These are published in Planning for Library Excellence, which defines a series of goals to help improve the quality of service. The measures of quality include building size, circulation, and the size of the library's collection of books and periodicals. There are three levels of quality for most of these guidelines, with Level III being the highest or "most excellent."

By the standards of the VSLB, the York County Public Library is approximately 55% too small and has too few books for the population it serves; for periodicals, however, the library exceeds the Level III standard of excellence, and in circulation, the library exceeds Level II. The space and book deficiencies were noted in the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, and the situation has worsened since then as a result of rapid population growth. The facility under construction will add 32,000 square feet and should meet future growth needs through the year 2015 and beyond. According to the population projections that appear in this plan, there will be 0.7 square feet of library space per capita in 2015.

Several changes to library service have been made since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in 1991. The York County Public Library's collection has grown by 15,000 books, 110 periodicals, and 1,720 audio/visual materials. Perhaps most significantly, however, the County is constructing a new library on Route 134. Also since 1991, the Williamsburg-James City County Regional Library system has constructed a branch library in the Norge area of James City County, and the Williamsburg Regional Library on Scotland Street has been expanded.

CITIZEN INPUT AND PLANNING POLICIES: LIBRARY SERVICE

In recent years, York County residents, particularly those who live in the Tabb area, have expressed considerable interest in expanded library service. On the Comprehensive Plan Review Survey, a new lower County library was ranked fifth by County citizens among desired community facilities, yet on the Citizen News questionnaire, libraries were listed as the top priority when citizens were asked, "Are there any new public services or facilities that you feel are needed in the County now or *will be* needed in the next twenty years?" As noted earlier, the new library recently completed on Route 134 will meet the library needs of lower County residents at least through 2015.

In the upper County, residents receive excellent service from the Williamsburg Regional Library system, but since York County is not a part of the regional system, there is no guarantee that this service will always be available. Sometime in the future the County may be faced with the need to become a full partner in the regional library system, or at least to increase the amount of funding it provides. In the Fiscal Year 1996-97, York County's contribution constituted 3.2% the Williamsburg Regional Library System's budget although the County represents about 12% of its registrants and its circulation.

PARKS AND RECREATION

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

York County offers a variety of programs for active and passive recreation. Programs for young people include soccer, tennis, basketball, summer playgrounds, sports camps, and instructional classes (e.g., art, music, and dance). Adult programs include softball, basketball, tennis, volleyball, aerobics, and instructional classes. For senior adults, York County operates the Senior Center of York, offering activities, classes, special events, and trips, and programs and activities sponsored by the Historic Triangle Senior Center located in the James City County-Williamsburg Community Center are available to seniors living in the upper County. Residents of all ages can participate in the County's open gym and "Skate, Rattle, and Roll" roller skating programs.

Several recreational programs, many of which use County facilities, are also available to County residents through private organizations and other public agencies. These include youth baseball/softball associations, youth football/cheerleading associations, soccer clubs, swim team/aquatic clubs, and youth wrestling associations. In addition, Williamsburg and James City County recreation programs and facilities are available to upper County residents. Such programs meet a significant portion of the demand in the County for recreational activities.

Most County recreational activities take place on school grounds in accordance with the “school/park concept,” which provides for the development of recreational facilities at school sites for community use. This has proven to be an effective and economical means of providing athletic fields, gymnasiums, basketball and tennis courts, and playground areas that serve both school and community needs. Other County park and recreational facilities include Back Creek Park, Charles E. Brown Park, Chisman Creek Park, Kiln Creek Park, New Quarter Park, Wolf Trap Park, the Yorktown Waterfront, and the Old Wormley Creek and Rodgers A. Smith public boat landings.

The County’s seven public boat ramps are located in the lower County. The County intends to improve the existing public access sites and acquire new land for recreational use. The Rodgers A. Smith boat ramp is slated for improvements, including an improved floating dock, public rest room facilities, and, in conjunction with the extension of sanitary sewer, a pump station that will allow for future pump-out facilities at the boat ramp.

Also located in the County are several non-County parks, including the Colonial National Historical Park (owned and operated by the National Park Service), Waller Mill Park (City of Williamsburg), and Harwoods Mill Park (City of Newport News). Finally, many subdivision and apartment complexes in the County have private recreational facilities – such as swimming pools, playing fields, tennis courts, weight rooms – available for their residents’ use.

County parks and school/park sites are heavily used. Participation in York County recreational programs has increased 542% since 1990. Seventy-two percent of this growth, however, is due to the addition of the Senior Center of York and associated activities, instructional classes, and the two roller skating programs. Nevertheless, growth in *existing* programs – particularly youth baseball/softball, soccer, and tennis and adult softball – has also been significant. Excluding new programs that were introduced and others that were discontinued or transferred between 1990 and 1997, there was a 78% increase in overall program participation and a 67% increase in youth program participation during that period. Growth in adult programs was more moderate, with a 15% increase between 1990 and 1997.

County recreational programs and facilities have undergone significant growth and change since the adoption of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan. One major change has been the opening of the Senior Center of York and the collaboration of regional programming efforts for seniors in the upper County with the Historic Triangle Senior Center. Another new program is the “Skate, Rattle, and Roll” roller skating program, which began in 1994 at the Historic Triangle Community Services Center and has been expanded to Dare Elementary School. An open gym program and an instructional class program were also initiated during this period. Since 1991 the County also has expanded the variety of summer sports camps, has begun offering summer field trips for teens, and began sponsoring an adult volleyball league and a fall adult softball league. Meanwhile, the County also entered into a contract with the York County Little League to take over the County-sponsored youth baseball and softball league programs and transferred to James City County the operation of the Williamsburg area soccer program.

Changes to County recreational facilities since 1991 include the opening of Wolf Trap Park in 1992 and the renovation of and construction of new facilities – including a Community Services Center – at Charles E. Brown Park. Chisman Creek Park’s softball fields were irrigated in 1995, and the floating wooden docks at Back Creek Park were replaced with floating concrete docks. A crabbing and fishing pier was also constructed at Back Creek Park.

In accordance with the school/park concept, there also have been numerous improvements to recreation facilities at school sites. Most notably, the Grafton High School/Middle School complex, including athletic fields and gymnasium space, was constructed, and development of Kiln Creek Park began.

Baseball/softball fields were constructed at two elementary schools and on leased property adjacent to Tabb High School. Soccer fields were constructed at two elementary schools, while lights were also added to soccer fields at two other elementary schools. A new field hockey/soccer field and six new tennis courts were constructed at York High School, while the football/soccer field at Bruton High School was renovated and lighted. The athletic fields and outdoor basketball courts at Grafton Bethel Elementary School were renovated and relocated, and gymnasiums/physical education spaces were added to four elementary schools.

CITIZEN INPUT AND PLANNING POLICIES: PARKS AND RECREATION

The demand for recreational programs and facilities to accommodate them is evident in the increasing number of County residents participating in such programs. Participation in recreational programs will continue to grow as the population grows, provided that the programs and facilities are available. Parks and recreational facilities – particularly passive recreation – rated relatively highly in the Comprehensive Plan Review Survey.

In planning future recreational programs and facilities, it is important to consider the age structure as well as the size of the population. Demographic trends indicate steady aging of the population as the baby boom continues to move through the life cycle. York County's population is projected to grow by more than 50% in the next twenty years, while the school-age population is projected to grow by almost 30%. The size of the youth population is particularly important since a larger proportion of the young people, who generally have more leisure time than most adults and tend to be more physically active, participates in recreation programs.

In recent years, many citizens have advocated the development of a community center, although it did not emerge as one of the highest priority facilities in the Comprehensive Plan Review Survey. One benefit of a community center is that it can be designed to accommodate the needs of different age groups and therefore is able to serve a large segment of the population. The County has acquired land on Route 134 adjacent to the Tabb library site for future construction of some type of community or recreation center that would serve lower County residents. To provide similar opportunities for upper County residents would most likely involve a cooperative arrangement with existing community/recreation centers operated by James City County or the City of Williamsburg.

Citizens have been well served by the school/park concept in York County. However, an important aspect of facility use is the effect of inadequate high school facilities on other school and park facilities that are supposed to be available for community use. For example, the Tabb and Grafton High School soccer and field hockey teams have had to use Mount Vernon Elementary School and Wolf Trap Park for their practices and games because of problems with athletic fields at these high schools. The intensity of high school interscholastic sports has had a detrimental effect on these fields such that they need to be renovated. However, because of the heavy demand for field usage, it would be extremely difficult to take these fields out of service without hindering community-based programs. Situations like these make it imperative to provide facilities that are able to support the effective operation of each high school's interscholastic athletic program.

Based on these factors, it is apparent that existing park facilities will not be able to meet all of the future demand for athletic fields in the County. Acquisition of land in addition to the existing school and park sites for development of athletic fields would at least enable current service levels to be maintained into the future. Consideration should also be given to lighting as many athletic fields as possible in order to maximize the available number of usage hours. Acquisition of additional land (especially in the lower County) should also be considered if there is any need in the future to develop other types of park and recreational facilities such as an outdoor pool, picnic areas/facilities, walking/bicycle trails, etc.

Proximity to the York River and the Chesapeake Bay makes boating an extremely popular activity in York County, but proximity does not guarantee access. Much of the County's shoreline is federally-owned, contributing to a shortage of boat landings in the County. The demand for water acreage from water-based recreational activities is expected to increase by 13% between the year 2000 and 2010. The 1990 Chesapeake Bay Public Access Plan recommends improved water access in the area west of the Coleman Bridge and east of York River State Park in James City County, along the Poquoson River,

along the Colonial Parkway, and along Queen Creek. Chisman Creek would also be a good site for a public boat launching facility because there is deeper water suitable for launching larger boats. The parking lot at Back Creek Park could also be considered for expansion. For canoeists and kayakers, the Wormley Creek Boat Landing has potential for improved access. In addition, increased accessibility to the large tidal marshes along the creeks of the County would allow for nature study and environmental education.

There has been interest in examining the feasibility of opening New Quarter Park on a regular basis and possibly providing additional recreational facilities, which would enable greater use of this facility by the public. The park's location along Queen Creek presents an opportunity for improved public access to the water, possibly with improved facilities for canoeing and kayaking. Proximity to the water also heightens the need for proper environmental stewardship and dictates that any new facilities be planned and constructed with particular attention to environmental impacts. Because the property was acquired through a federal surplus land program, the deed for the park stipulates that the Department of Interior must approve any future development plans and that the site must be used in perpetuity for public recreational purposes only.

SCHOOLS

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The York County school system consists of ten elementary schools, four middle schools, and four high schools. In addition, the County owns an undeveloped 20-acre school site in the Kiln Creek area. York County operates one magnet school program, the School of the Arts, which is located at Bruton High School and offers classes in literary and theater arts. York County schools also provide adult learning opportunities in both basic and continuing education.

School enrollment, like population, is a function of both the birth rate and the net migration rate. This is clearly illustrated in **Figure 6**, which shows that the 1960s – when the entire school population was made up of members of the baby boom – were the school system's major growth period. The baby boom brought a net increase of 4,500 school students between 1960 and 1970. Growth in school enrollment slowed down during the 1970s as the baby bust replaced the baby boom, leading eventually to a decline in enrollment between 1980 and 1985. This period of decline was short-lived, however, as members of the baby boom began to have babies of their own, producing a "baby boom echo" that triggered a resurgence of school enrollment growth beginning in 1986. This occurred just as new home construction also began to rise, bringing a rapid influx of new families into York County and new students into the school system. The combined effect of the increasing birth rate and the fifth-highest net migration rate in Virginia has been a 22% increase in school enrollment in the 1990s.

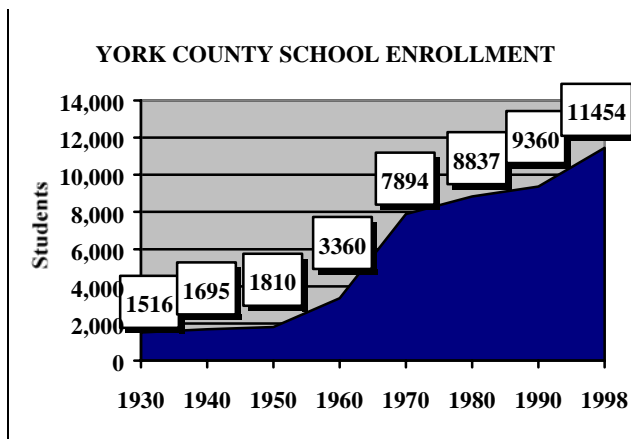


Figure 6

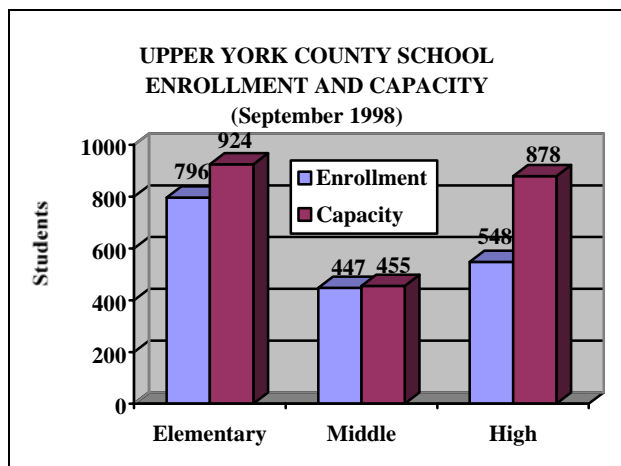


Figure 7

Over 95% of the growth in school enrollment has been in the lower County. While upper County enrollment has been fairly stable in the 1990s, growing by a total of 90 students (5%), the number of students in lower County schools has climbed by over 1,700 (22.5%).

At the same time that enrollment began to increase dramatically, the school system's

building capacity declined as a result of a recalculation of school capacity by the School Board. In 1992, the School Board hired a consultant to measure the *program* capacity of each of the County schools based not only on the size of each instructional space but also the program for which it was being used. Previous capacity figures had always been based on the original architectural capacity of the school buildings, which does not take into account the constraints placed on physical space by programs, State education mandates, and School Board policies. Several sets of figures were prepared under differing scenarios regarding such variables as the student/classroom ratio and the range of classes offered at each school level. The School Board ultimately adopted program capacity figures nearly 25% below the architectural capacity figures that had been used previously.

Growing enrollment and the reduction in capacity led to overcrowding in some schools, particularly at the elementary level, and the Board of Supervisors and School Board have taken steps to alleviate this overcrowding. The most notable of these steps is the construction of the Grafton High School/Middle School complex, which opened in September 1996 and increased total system capacity by 2300. Additions have been built at several other schools, including Coventry, Grafton-Bethel, Yorktown, Magruder, Dare, Bethel Manor, and Tabb Elementary Schools. Tabb High is being re-built and expanded.

More an art than a science, projecting future school enrollment is an exercise in educated guesswork because of the many intangible variables involved. Enrollment projection is especially difficult in localities like York County that have sizable military populations; military transfers, as well as changes in defense policy at the Federal level, are unforeseeable events that can produce great fluctuations in enrollment. Nevertheless, it is possible to glean some insight into future school enrollment trends by analyzing the long-range trends of the past.

The school enrollment projections contained in this plan were developed by the Forecast 2015 Committee, which was discussed in the Demographic Profile and Projections section of this plan. These long-range projections were adopted by the Board of Supervisors in January 1996 and are shown in **Table 4**. This table also shows current school capacity.

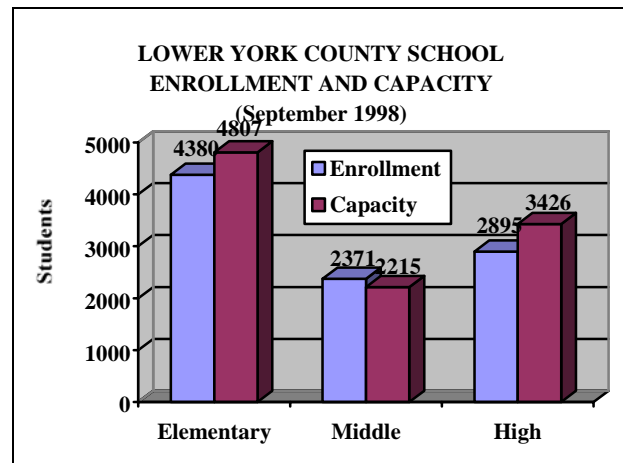


Figure 8

ACTUAL AND PROJECTED YORK COUNTY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND CAPACITY												
	1992 Program Capacity	1994 (Actual)		1998 Program Capacity	1999 (Projected)		2004 (Projected)		2009 (Projected)		2014 (Projected)	
		Students	Surplus or Deficit		Students	Surplus or Deficit	Students	Surplus or Deficit	Students	Surplus or Deficit	Students	Surplus or Deficit
UPPER COUNTY												
Elementary	694	812	-118	924	940	-16	1,010	-86	1,020	-96	1,070	-146
Middle	455	427	28	455	440	15	550	-95	570	-115	570	-115
High	878	550	328	878	630	248	620	258	760	118	760	118
TOTAL	2027	1789	238	2257	2010	247	2,180	77	2,350	-93	2,400	-143
LOWER COUNTY												
Elementary	3,573	4,122	-549	4,807	5,030	-223	4,980	-173	4,860	-53	4,790	17
Middle	1,215	2,085	-870	2,215	2,440	-225	2,910	-695	2,750	-535	2,760	-545
High	2,126	2,570	-444	3,654	3,230	424	3,490	164	4,100	-446	3,760	-106
TOTAL	6,914	8,777	-1863	10,676	10,700	-24	11,380	-704	11,710	-1034	11,310	-634
TOTAL COUNTY												
Elementary	4,267	4,934	-667	5,731	5,970	-239	5,990	-259	5,880	-149	5,860	-129
Middle	1,670	2,512	-842	2,670	2,880	-210	3,460	-790	3,320	-650	3,330	-660
High	3,004	3,120	-116	4,532	3,860	672	4,110	422	4,870	-338	4,520	12
TOTAL	8,941	10,566	-1625	12,933	12,710	223	13,560	-627	14,070	-1137	13,710	-777
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future changes in programs may lead to capacity changes. • Shaded areas indicate actual or projected deficits. • Projections from <u>Forecast 2015</u>, the report of the Comprehensive Plan Forecast 2015 Committee, adopted by the York County Board of Supervisors January 17, 1996. 												

Table 4

According to these projections, school enrollment will continue to grow for the next fifteen years, peaking at approximately 14,100 students in the 2009-10 school year. The increase in births through 1995 will be reflected in a growing elementary school enrollment through the year 2005 and elementary enrollment will begin to rise again after 2010 – five years after births are projected to rebound. Steady growth in the elementary schools will fuel increases in the middle school population, where enrollment is projected to continue to grow through 2005 – with accelerated growth in the 2000-05 period – and decline thereafter. Middle school enrollment is projected to peak at 3,460 in the 2004-05 school year. This represents an increase of one-third over 1995-96 enrollment. Similarly, high school enrollment will continue to grow through 2010, fueled by steady growth at the middle school level. High school enrollment is projected to reach almost 4,900 – almost a 50% increase over 1994-95 enrollment – in 2010 before turning downward. Lower County schools will bear the brunt of this growth. Having reviewed the projections, it should be noted that total enrollment for the month of September 1998 was 11,454. This is a clear indication that, although revised downward from 1992 projections, the Forecast 2015 projections made in 1996 may be overstated.

CITIZEN INPUT AND PLANNING POLICIES: SCHOOLS

Maintaining the quality of the school system is a top priority of York County's citizens. Schools were ranked higher than any other type of community facility on the survey. Furthermore, "building more school classrooms" ranked fifth among overall County goals on the survey. The survey also asked citizens to rank three alternative methods of alleviating school overcrowding in order of preference. The three options given were 1) changing school attendance zone boundaries, 2) installing portable classrooms (trailers), and 3) building new permanent classrooms. Permanent construction was the favored choice, followed by shifting attendance zones; portable classrooms were a distant third.

In the absence of any other considerations, building new schools might appear to be the ideal means of addressing school overcrowding and keeping class sizes low, but this strategy may conflict with the citizens' top goal, which is to keep taxes low. Although not the most popular options, attendance zone changes and portable classrooms are much more fiscally prudent ways of dealing with short-term enrollment fluctuations.

Since school enrollment can be so volatile and thus difficult to forecast beyond the short term, it would be neither realistic nor prudent to make school construction recommendations based on long-range

enrollment projections. Six years is an appropriate horizon for school facility planning. Unless there is a remarkable unforeseen increase in enrollment over the projected levels, it appears that no new school buildings or additions will be needed to enlarge capacity in the next six years with the exception of a middle school addition in the lower county.

CITIZEN INPUT AND PLANNING POLICIES: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

According to the results of the citizen input process, County residents favor the addition of new public facilities and services provided that it can be done without raising taxes or user fees. About 54% of the citizens support this position, while another third feel the County should add new facilities and services regardless of whether or not they require a tax increase. Nine percent of the citizens oppose the construction of any new facilities, which they feel would encourage more residential growth.

The Comprehensive Plan Review survey contained a list of eight possible public facilities and asked the citizens to score them based on the level of priority they felt should be placed on each. The results appear in **Table 5** and are illustrated graphically in **Figure 9**. In tabulating the responses to this question, each response was given a numerical score on an ordinal scale of zero to five, with five representing “Very High Priority” and zero representing “No Priority.” The overall mean average of scores was 2.72 with a standard deviation of 1.63, so in general, any average score greater than 2.72 is at least a *rough* indicator that the citizens generally support it. Any scores that differ from the mean by more than one standard deviation are considered to be unusually high or low. For this reason, scores lower than 1.09 or higher than 4.35 would be of particular significance; however, there are no such scores. With regard to the types of new facilities that should be built, education, parks and recreation (particularly passive), and law enforcement appear to be areas of particular need. Facilities for which there does not appear to be much strong demand among the citizens include satellite County offices and a golf course at New Quarter Park.

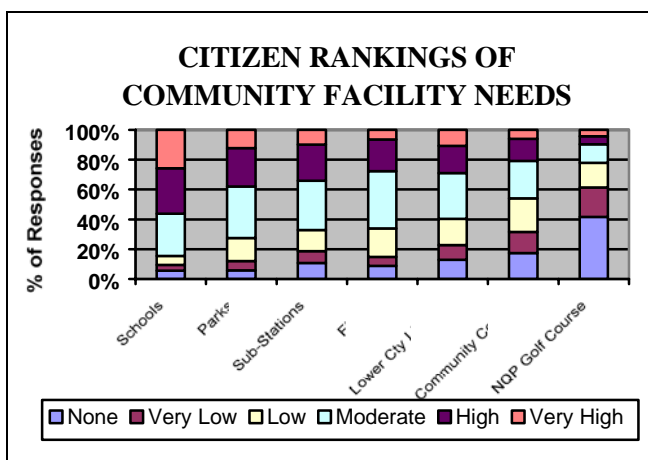


Figure 9

COMMUNITY FACILITY SURVEY RESPONSES	
Facility	Average Score
Schools	3.52
Parks for Passive Recreation	3.05
Satellite Sheriff's Sub-Stations	2.89
Athletic Fields	2.70
Lower County Library	2.64
Community Recreation Center	2.24
Satellite Offices	1.96
New Quarter Park Golf Course	1.30

Table 5

A VISION FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

York County should be a community where the citizens feel safe from crime, receive prompt and effective emergency services when needed, and have convenient access to public facilities at appropriate locations to serve them economically and efficiently.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GENERAL

- 1 Coordinate the location and timing of public facilities in recognition of existing and anticipated needs and characteristics--including the age distribution and location--of present and projected future populations.**
 - 1.1 Use the Comprehensive Plan to guide the budgeting of County funds for capital improvement projects.
 - 1.2 Annually review and update, with a resolution from the Planning Commission to certify its conformance with the Comprehensive Plan, the six-year Capital Improvements Program.
 - 1.3 Provide public buildings that set an example for quality development in the County.
 - 1.4 Provide regular, ongoing review, maintenance, and repair of all public buildings.
- 2 Avoid wasteful duplication of effort in the construction and operation of public facilities.**
 - 2.1 Where feasible, cooperate with neighboring localities to establish and maintain regional public facilities for the use of residents of multiple jurisdictions.
 - 2.2 Design public buildings to accommodate a variety of uses.

COURTS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICES

- 3 Maintain historic Yorktown as the seat of County government.**
- 4 Make optimum use of existing court and office space.**
 - 4.1 Develop a space-saving computer-based method of storing and retrieving County files and records.
 - 4.2 Develop a pilot program to test the feasibility of allowing some County employees to work from their homes (i.e., telecommute) using modern technology.

DETENTION AND ENFORCEMENT

- 5 Provide Sheriff's facilities to accommodate manpower levels sufficient to provide prompt and effective crime protection, prevention, and law enforcement to all areas of the County.**
 - 5.1 Evaluate the need for and feasibility of establishing Sheriff's substations in strategic locations, such as the upper County, Lackey, and Tabb.
- 6 Provide detention/correctional facilities of sufficient capacity to house securely and safely the County's future adult and juvenile inmate population.**

FIRE AND RESCUE

7 Provide fire stations to accommodate manpower levels sufficient to provide prompt and effective fire and emergency medical response to all areas of the County.

- 7.1 Locate and design fire stations in such a way as to provide opportunities for expansion of service as necessary based on future population growth and development patterns.

8 Maintain a five-minute average fire and emergency response time to at least 90% of the County's land area.

- 8.1 Continue to cooperate with neighboring localities and area military installations through mutual emergency aid agreements providing for the sharing of resources in the event of a major fire or other disaster.
- 8.2 Provide greater opportunities for the training of County fire and rescue personnel.
- 8.3 Consider the needs of the Fire and Rescue Service with regard to roadway access and water availability prior to approval of development plans and in all decisions regarding utility extension and roadway construction.

LIBRARIES

9 Achieve higher levels of excellence in library service.

- 9.1 Expand the number and range of library books, tapes, periodicals, and other materials as necessitated by population growth, public demand, and technological changes.

10 Provide convenient library service to all areas of the County.

- 10.1 Continue the current practice of contributing funding to the Williamsburg Regional Library system in exchange for service to York County residents.
- 10.2 Provide state-of-the-art on-line access to the library services of York County.

PARKS AND RECREATION

11 Provide for a range of recreational facilities and activities adequate in number, type, size, and location to accommodate the needs of County residents.

- 11.1 Complete implementation of the "school/park" concept to enhance recreational use of school sites.
- 11.2 Develop a comprehensive parks and recreation master plan to coordinate the long-range acquisition of sufficient acreage for additional recreation facilities and public access to waterfront areas to meet the existing and future demands for both public and private recreation programs.
- 11.3 Develop a community center with meeting rooms, recreational facilities, kitchen facilities, and multi-purpose rooms.
- 11.4 Provide for the particular needs of the young, the elderly, and the physically and sensory challenged when planning for recreational facilities.
- 11.5 Consider the recommendations of the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) Regional Shoreline Study for increasing public recreational and boating access to waterways.
- 11.6 Under the direction of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, explore the feasibility of

- developing athletic fields on the County's two former landfill sites, and
 - expanding existing recreational facilities.
- 11.7 Identify and recognize private and other non-County facilities and programs that help meet the recreational demands of County residents.
- 11.8 Promote the provision of open space and recreational facilities in new residential development.
- 11.9 Explore the feasibility of a public boat launch site on Chisman Creek.
- 12 Increase use of New Quarter Park**
- 12.1 Open New Quarter Park to the general public for both passive and active recreation purposes on a regular basis.
- 12.2 Develop a master plan for New Quarter Park to provide additional facilities consistent with the goals of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and the Chesapeake 2000 agreement.
- 13 Ensure that athletic fields and other recreational facilities are well-maintained**
- 13.1 Take athletic fields out of use on a rotating basis.

SCHOOLS

- 14 Provide a learning environment that is conducive to the education of all present and future school-age children in the County.**
- 14.1 Consider the general boundaries of residential neighborhoods and their proximity to schools in establishing school attendance zones.
- 14.2 Review school enrollment projections every three years.
- 14.3 Before approving rezonings and planned developments, consider their potential impact on the school system so as to minimize school crowding.
- 14.4 Provide a cafeteria and gymnasium in every school.
- 14.5 Provide regular, ongoing review, maintenance, and repair of school buildings.
- 14.6 Support and strengthen the vo-tech school program with private sector assistance in the development of the school curricula.
- 14.7 Provide for regional alternative education programs.
- 15 Achieve and maintain the following overall student/classroom ratios and program capacity guidelines at each school:**

<u>SCHOOL LEVEL</u>	<u>STUDENT/CLASSROOM RATIOS</u>	<u>PROGRAM CAPACITY GUIDELINES</u>
Elementary:	22:1	350-700 students
Middle:	23:1	700-1000 students

High:**25:1****1200-1800 students**

- 15.1 When feasible, alleviate school overcrowding through revisions to school attendance zones as long as there is excess school capacity at the appropriate grade level in the system.
- 15.2 Install portable classrooms to alleviate **temporary** overcrowding (i.e., three years or less).
- 15.3 Alleviate **long-term** overcrowding by optimizing school capacity through permanent additions to and modifications of existing schools.
- 15.4 Build new schools if and only if capacity deficits are projected to exceed the minimum program capacity level at the appropriate grade level for five or more years.
- 15.5 Encourage future magnet programs, if any, to be located where excess capacity exists.

16 Optimize use of school facilities and grounds.

- 16.1 Maintain the formal written agreement between the School Board and the Board of Supervisors providing for the sharing of recreational facilities on school grounds and setting specific terms for their use.

17 Promote lifelong learning.

- 17.1 Participate with neighboring localities in providing for regional “continuing education” programs for adults – such as the Regional Partnership for Continuing Education and Peninsula Workforce Center at Thomas Nelson Community College – in York County and throughout the Peninsula.